Understanding the Galdrabók & Creating Original Designs

by Greg Crowfoot

PART 1:INTRODUCTORY CONCEPTS, TERROR-STAVES, DREAM-STAVES AND THEIR CONSTRUCTION

Introduction

The Galdrabók is a collection of Icelandic grimoires, or magical texts, dating from the 16th to 17th centuries. The Galdrabók presents modern-day rune magicians with a wide variety of magical designs. Among them are several versions of the famous 'Ægishjálmur', or "Helm of Awe."

As a whole, the Galdrabók utilizes traditional Northern symbology combined with a western European influence (which reflects the joint effect of Old Norse and Christian-Era culture upon the history and traditions of Iceland). But the Galdrabók's designs go well beyond those of the traditional bind-rune formulae we are generally familiar with. Even a passing glance at the spells of the Galdrabók will impress anyone familiar with rune-magic of their high degree of sophistication and the potential power designs like them could have in magical operations.

Several books discuss the Galdrabók either in its entirety or in excerpts: "THE GALDRABÓK" as translated by

Stephen E. Flowers, and "NORTHERN MAGIC," by Edred Thorsson.

The problem for the rune magicians of today is that in many cases the Galdrabóks' designs are so complex and so abstract that they defy easy understanding. This makes it difficult, if not impossible for rune-magicians to employ designs of similar complexity and power for their own workings. This was certainly the case when I first encountered "THE GALDRABÓK". Even one of my first instructors in the northern tradition was intimidated by it, and was unwilling to even attempt a decipherment of its enigmatic forms. According to him, the keys to the composition of the Galdrabók's designs had been lost and could not be recovered. I did not accept that idea and subsequently embarked on an effort to find them.

After considerable private study, I arrived at a number of methods that I believe allow an understanding of many of the designs presented in "THE GALDRABÓK" and will make the construction of original forms possible.

Originally, my methods of 'decipherment' were incorporated into my own groups' advanced runic studies-class (as presented in our formal training program). These methods are by no means the only ones which allow the creation of Terror-staves (Óttastafur), Dream-staves

(Draumstafur), "Super-binds" or workable "Helms of Awe" (Ægishjálmur). I invite input from anyone who has followed a different course and arrived at a successful conclusion.

**Basic Principles of Sigil-Magic and the Galdrabók**

As I interpret them, the designs contained within the Galdrabók are essentially a combination of classic 'Sigil-Magic' and standard runic-formulae taken to the extreme. The Icelandic magicians who composed the Galdrabók were certainly familiar with both bodies of knowledge and I believe that they combined them when they composed their designs. Therefore, it is only through an understanding of these two forms of magic and how they interact together in the Galdrabók, that I feel that it will begin to yield up its secrets.

To accomplish this, we must examine the basic principles of Sigil-magic and how they were employed by the Icelandic magicians. For those who are already familiar with such techniques, I must beg your indulgence and direct your attention to the points where Sigil-magic and Galdrabók designs intermarry. For others who are less familiar with this subject, and desire to undertake a deeper study, I recommend Frater U.D.'s excellent work, "PRACTICAL SIGIL MAGIC."

In classic Sigil-magic, normal written characters (such as the Latin alphabet) are often modified in order to conceal their true form. This has two purposes; to prevent recognition of the spell's intent by others who might 'psychically tamper' with it, and to prevent the magicians' conscious mind from being able to introduce doubt into the equation.

Rigid letter-forms used in Sigil-magic may be changed into rounded forms, 'mirrored' or re drawn in new rigid forms. Often, these modified characters are then combined into a single symbol, in much the same manner as a bind rune (see my Diagram 1).

Diagram 1:Modified Letter-Forms (Latin Characters)
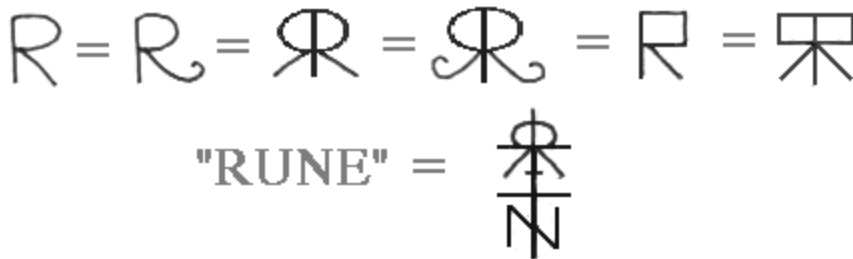
Icelandic magicians employed both Norse runes and Latin characters in their binds and as a further departure, altered them into rounded, mirrored or modified rigid-forms (please see my Diagram 2). I believe that their inspiration for these forms came from a knowledge of runic variant-forms and the principles of basic Sigil-work.

**Diagram 2: A Modified Bind Rune**

"GRIMNIR" = and
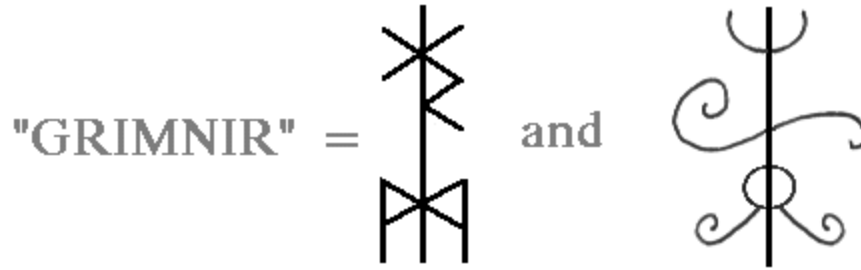
In Diagrams 3 and 4, I have supplied a table of the runes as they appear in the Elder Futhark, followed by variant-forms which I believe were utilized by the authors of the Galdrabók in the composition of their rune-spells. While the majority of variant-forms I have presented in Diagrams 3 and 4 are taken directly from source material ("FUTHARK" and "RUNENMAGIE"), a small percentage of them have been extrapolated by me from existing variant-forms (based upon the rules for modification of a character as imposed by standard Sigil-magic). Where possible, these are identified with an asterisk(*).

In addition to modifying the shape of the runes, the authors of the Galdrabók did not limit themselves to the standard number of runes we normally associate with bind-forms. Although they were careful to compose their rune spells in accordance with northern numerology, they commonly employed dozens of runes in what I call "Super-binds"(please see my Diagram 5 for an example of a "Super-

bind").

Diagram 5: A "Super-bind"
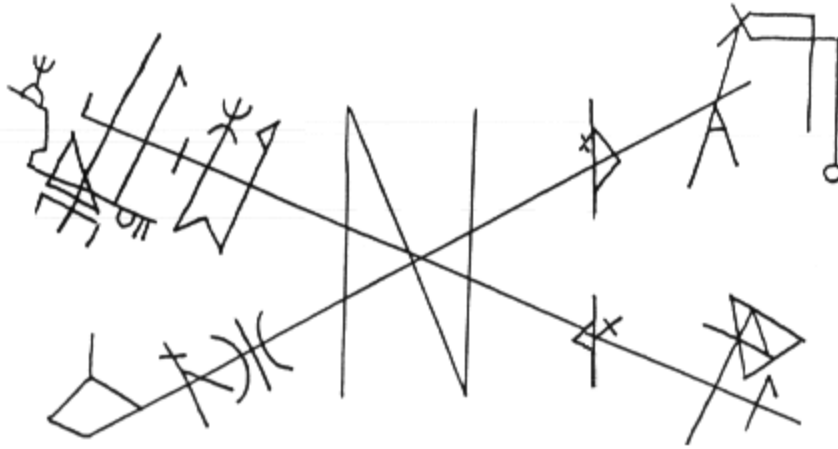
Another Sigil-magic practice also played its part in
many Galdrabók spells. This was the addition of pictographic
images.

In the pictographic method of Sigil-magic, a simplified
image is used to help express a magical intent and the
desired result. For example, a stick-figure is drawn to
represent the person intended by the magician as the
'target' of the spell. The stick-figure is then
surrounded or combined with magic symbols which invoke the
appropriate forces into the 'targets' sphere of existence.
Like letter-forms, this magical 'cartoon' can be modified
until it is no longer easily recognized.

The Terror-stave on page 88 of "THE GALDRABÓK" (and my
Diagram 6) is an excellent example of the pictographic

method in use. Looking at the Galdrabók material as a whole, it would seem that the pictographic method of Sigil-magic was quite popular with medieval northern sorcerers.

Diagram 6: A "Terror-stave"

"Magic-squares" also had an important place in northern magic. A magic square for those who are unfamiliar with them, is a grid composed of letters or numbers which correspond to a particular deity, planetary force or mystic 'phrase'. Magic squares can be used by themselves as a talisman. They can also be the key for an incantation, or used to create a magic symbol.

The "SATOR" square is one the most famous of these magic squares. It uses letters, rather than numbers in its grid. Some experts believe that it was originally a Christian charm, using letters from the first words of the Lord's Prayer "Pater Noster" and "A"(alpha) and "O"(omega), to create "SATOR". Others believe that the square had its origins in Qabalistic magic. In the "GREATER KEY OF SOLOMON" it is depicted as the Second Pentacle of Saturn, adding up to the numerical value of "IHVH" (or the

"Tetragrammaton").

The "SATOR" sqaure may have other roots however. Sven Ulfsson postulates that "SATOR" may be the correlate of Sæter, a lesser-known Germanic deity who was later adopted by the Romans and 'Latinized' into 'Saturn'. Saturn or Cronos (as he was known to the Greeks) was the father of the Olympians and the God of Time. Because of these creative aspects of Cronos, Ulfsson feels that Sæter may have been another name of Volund, the Smith. He points out that many medieval magicians were also smiths and their use of the "SATOR" square may have had deep meaning to them for that reason.

Nigel Pennick also equates Sæter with Saturn, but he links Saturn with Loki instead. Loki the Trickster (like all other Trickster figures we encounter in the world's mythologies) is on the one hand a chaotic force, and on the other a helping 'Luciferian' light-bringer. As the Shapechanger, he is clearly a figure of magic and the supernatural. If we also accept the admittedly controversial idea that Loki is also the God of Fire (based on the possible etymological link between 'Logi' or 'wildfire' and the name 'Loki'), we have another interesting theory about the meaning behind the "SATOR" square. Fire, as my

readers are no doubt aware, plays an important part in Germanic ritual and magic. Like Loki, fire can either be the creative 'giver of warmth' and the source of illumination, or a destructive agent. If Pennick and the link Loki might have with the element of fire are correct, then it is possible that through the use of the "SATOR" square, medieval magicians were not only invoking Loki's aid, but also affirming a simple fact about magic itself. Like fire, they knew that magic can either be a positive force or a negative one depending upon the operators' level of knowledge and how that magic is used.

Whether the reader agrees with Ulfsson or Pennick, the issue these men raise is an interesting one. If as they say, Sæter is connected to the "SATOR" square, then regardless of which northern deity it is associated with, the square has deep roots in the northern magical tradition (however "Christianized" it might later have become).

From the spells in the Galdrabók it is clear however, that northern magicians of the middle ages practiced a 'mixed' form of magic (similar to the folk-magic of Mexico today) combining Pagan and Christian beliefs. Therefore it is possible that they saw the "SATOR" square in both contexts.

In the final analysis, all of the theories put forth about the "SATOR" square's origin, are pure conjecture. No one is entirely sure about it's age, birthplace or the deity it may have been linked to.

What we completely certain of is that northern medieval sorcerers regarded the "SATOR" square as a powerful magical formula. It was employed by them in all manner of operations. The square saw use as a ward against negative magic and a talisman for controlling spirits. It was even said that an evil witch could not bear to stay in the same room with the "SATOR" square.

The "SATOR" square is mentioned by Stephen Flowers in "THE GALDRABÓK ", on pages 48 and 50. He informs us that this symbol was well-known to northern rune-magicians. In addition to the example he furnishes us with on page 50, he tells us that the square has been found in at least 7 other runic-inscriptions.

The "SATOR" square on page 50 was inscribed on the bottom of a bowl found in Sweden and dates from the late 1300's (predating the material in the Galdrabók). It is interesting to note that this particular "SATOR" square is incomplete. Normally the "SATOR" square would read: "SATOR-AREPO-TENET-OPERA-ROTAS"(from top to bottom). Instead

we find only: "SATOR-ARÆPO-TÆNÆT". It is conceivable that the

last two lines were considered secret, and known only to the

magician (whether this 'omission' was common to other

northern "SATOR" squares I do not know, for want of further

examples). For a completed "SATOR" square and its runic

counterpart, please see my Diagram 7.

Diagram 7:The "SATOR" Square and Its Runic Equivalent
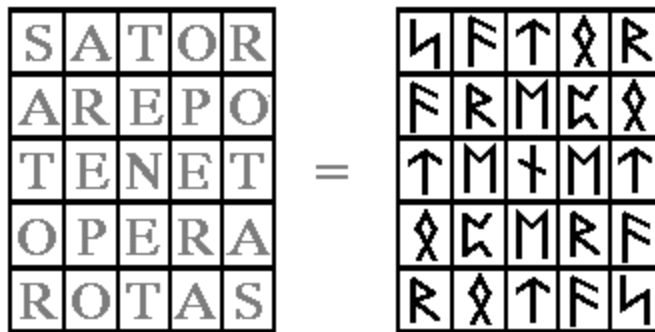
Aside from its possible use as a talisman against rival

sorcerers, the "SATOR" square was also an important key for

magical incantations. Flowers mentions that many northern

magical books required the magician to recite the "sator-

arepo" during their operations. Flowers is unsure whether

this incantation involved the 'singing' of the runes of the

"SATOR" grid themselves, or if the runes where the key to

another group of sounds altogether. Personally, I believe

that we need look no further than the "SATOR" square itself

for the mysterious "sator-arepo" incantation. If this magic

square acts like any of the ones that I have had experience

with, the process is a simple matter of signing the runes as we sing their sounds, starting with "SATOR", going on to "AREPO", then "TENET", then "OPERA" and finally "ROTAS". To banish the magical energies we will have invoked by doing this, the procedure is merely reversed.

Naturally, this method of invocation is not written in stone as 'the only true way' and I admit the possibility of other approaches. Once again, I invite anyone to comment on this matter who has worked a with a different procedure and has realized a successful result.

The last feature of classical Sigil-magic worth examining is the timing of a spell-casting operation to coincide with the most beneficial planetary days and hours. Practitioners of western ceremonial magic (as the authors of the Galdrabók certainly were) know that timing a magical operation to align with the proper planetary forces adds the extra 'kick' that might make the all the difference between success and failure. While it is possible that medieval northern magicians referred to southern tables of planetary hours and their attributes, it is also quite likely that they timed their rune-magic to follow the northern cycle of the runes and the hours of the day they correspond to. Anyone who has read Nigel Pennick's "PRACTICAL MAGIC IN THE

NORTHERN TRADITION" and "RUNIC ASTROLOGY", or Spiesberger's "RUNENMAGIE", will be familiar with the system of 'runic-hours' of the day immediately. It is probably safe to say that no spell using the Galdrabók's technology should be undertaken without also ensuring proper timing of the operation. This has certainly been my practice and I recommend the same to anyone else attempting it. For details on various methods for timing the 'carving' of runes in Galdrabók spells, please refer to the various 'Construction Projects' at the end of each design example.

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With all of this in mind, let's get to work. We will examine several Galdrabók designs with an eye towards understanding their content and creating new versions for our own use. In Part 1, we will address the composition and creation of Terror staves (Óttastafur), Dream-staves (Draumstafur). In Part 2, we will explore "Super-binds" and finally in Part 3, the Helm of Awe (Ægishjálmur).

Terror-staves (Óttastafur)

The 'Terror-stave' (so-named by me for a design on page 88 of "THE GALDRABÓK") and similar designs, are the most basic expression of the pictographic method of Sigil magic (please see my Diagram 8 and pages 91-93 of "THE

GALDRABÓK"; Appendices: Related spells in Germanic Magic).

Here we see the subject(s) of the spell rendered in a simple

form with runic-variants attached to it, or depicted

in a more highly modified forms which are still simple

enough to convey the idea of the original stick-figure.

Diagram 8:Examples of "Terror-Staves"
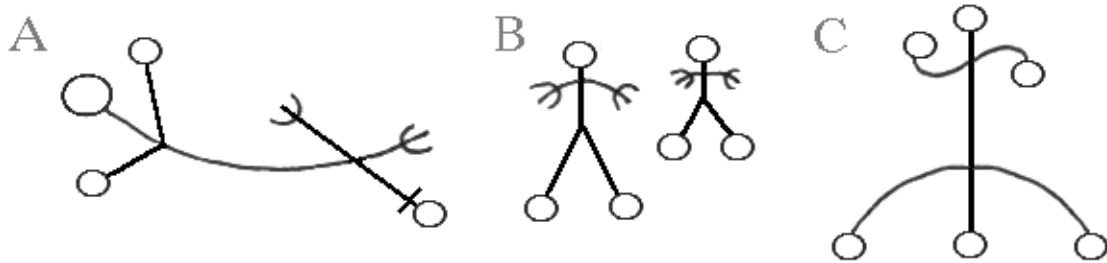
The first design in my Diagram 8, shows a curved stick-

figure with what is in all probability, a rigid variant of

Tyr. The second pair of figures is even simpler and seems to

employ the stick forms by themselves without the benefit of

any runes.

The same may also be true of my third example

(although I have the strong suspicion that the 'arms' of

this figure employ a rounded version of Gifu and the third

'leg' helps to create a variant of Eihwaz). This particular

Sigil is supposed to grant victory over others (when worn in

secret under the arm) and that may explain the use of these

two runes in its design.

Construction:

Our work will be divided into four stages: a)Basic Intent (the concept behind our project), b)the Design Stage (composition), c)the 'Carving' stage (the actual magical operation), and d)Application.

a)Basic Intent

Borrowing from a spell in the Galdrabók, let's assume that the purpose of our Terror-stave is to win an individual in a business dealing over to our point of view.

b)Design

Our 'target' is drawn as a simple stick-figure. Appropriate runes are then added to the figure in a modified form (in this case, rigid variants of Wunjo and Tyr). From this point, we can modify our image into a curved form to give it less of the feel of a simple drawing and more of the look we would expect in a magical sigil. The final result is a pictographic bind (please see my Diagram 9 for the steps used). Checking our math, the total numerical value of our Terror-stave is 25 (Wunjo=8 and Tyr=17). 25 is divisible by 5, the number of order and time, and a powerful sum when used in magical operations.

Naturally, if we had not arrived at an appropriate sum, we would have been forced to add in additional runes until we arrived at it (for the same reasons we would do this in a

conventional bind).

c)'Carving'

With our stave designed, we a ready to 'carve' 'redden' and 'sing' the actual talisman. To properly align our magical working with the runic-hours, we would consult a reliable source for the proper times and schedule our work to coincide with them (such as Pennick's "PRACTICAL MAGIC IN THE NORTHERN TRADITION", Spiesberger's "RUNENMAGIE" or some other text). In this particular case, we would 'carve' and 'sing' over the first rune, Tyr and our main pictograph at 5:00 AM and inscribe Wunjo later that evening at 8:00 PM. If for some reason this schedule was not feasible, a more convenient schedule could be arrived at by basing our work solely upon the time of the rune which best expressed the overall intent of the spell. For this Terror-stave, the rune would be Tyr and our working time 5:00 AM.

Once we established 'what' we will build and 'when' we will build it, the next question will be 'how' we will go about our work. If we desired to follow in the footsteps of the Galdrabók magicians, we would make sure to begin and end our ritual with a recitation of the 'sator-arepo' incantation (along with prayers addressed to the appropriate Gods and Goddesses). As far as the actual 'carving',

'reddening' and 'singing' operation went, the procedure would be the same as with any conventional bind. The only other item worth mentioning here is that in keeping with the simplicity of Terror-staves, we have not 'personalized' the final product (i.e. added in the name in runes of our 'target'). We must therefore make sure that we have fully visualized the person we wish to affect and the desired result as we work.

d)Application

The completed rune-sigil will be worn as an amulet, or as the authors of the Galdrabók suggest in a few cases, drawn on a piece of parchment and carried in a pocket when we next meet with our subject.

Diagram 9: Construction of a "Terror-stave"

Step A

Step B

Step C
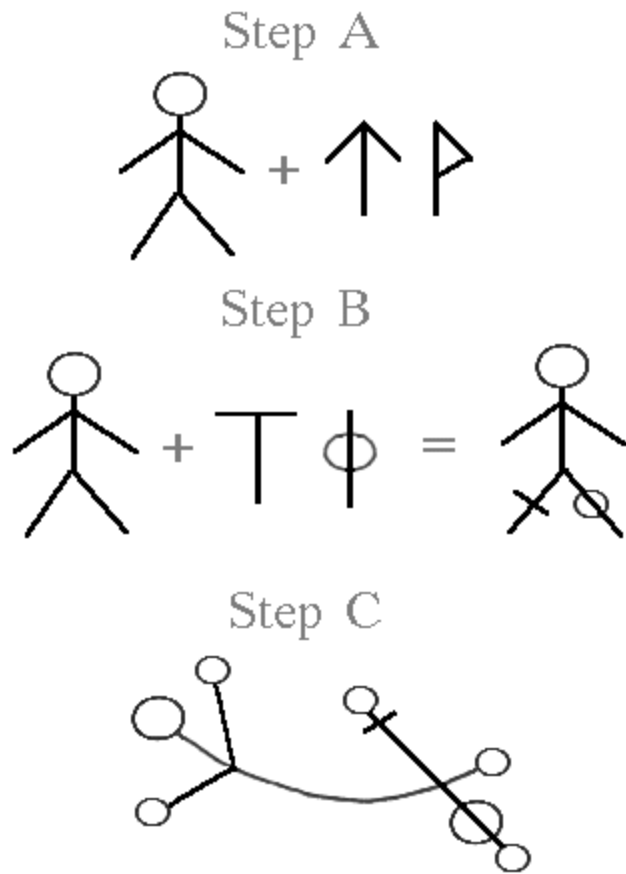
Dream-staves (Draumstafur)

Examples of the Draumstafur or Dream-stave can be found

on pages 85 and 86 of "THE GALDRABÓK" (see also my Diagram

10). Their purpose is exactly what their name indicates; to

cause specific dreams.

The forms expressed in Figures A and B of Diagram 10

use what appears to be an open variant of Thurisaz (the

classic 'sleep-thorn') acting as an encirclement around the

other runes employed in the spell. This symbol has circular

terminators at its' ends. According to Edred Thorsson in his

book "NORTHERN MAGIC" in the section dealing with the

Ægishjálmur, circular terminators act to re-circulate the

energy of the spell back to the design and to the subject

the spell is intended for.

Diagram 10: Examples of "Dream-staves"

Fig.A
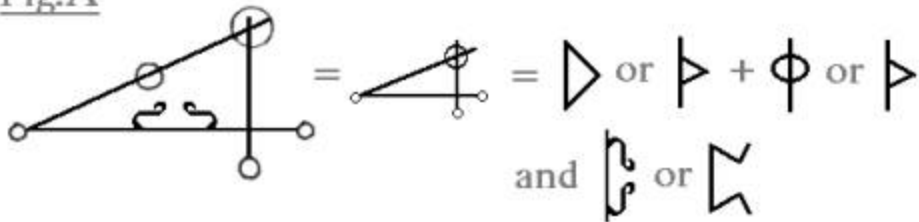
Fig.B
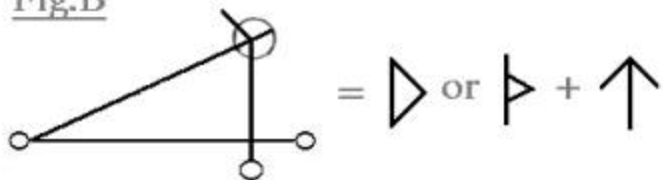
Fig.C
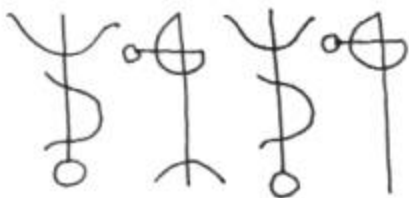
The first Dream-stave in our Diagram, Figure A, shows

the addition of a variant of Thurisaz (in its' rounded form)

and Perthro. This Draumstafur, according to the Galdrabók's

text, is designed to induce any dream that is desired by the

operator.

In our second dream-stave (Figure B), the main body of

the Thurisaz-encirclement is free of other runes, but we

find what appears to be Tyr in a fairly conventional form branching off one of its' corners. This stave is designed to bring dreams to another, without their knowledge. It is possible that Tyr was included in this stave to overcome the subjects' natural psychic resistance to an outside influence.

Our third example is a complete departure from the previous two designs. Figure C shows an example of four runic bind-forms, working together in concert. These binds have been rendered in rounded form according to the rules of Sigil-magic.

Construction:

The steps we will take to construct our Draumstafur are the same as those we took with the Terror-stave. As before, we will start with our basic intent.

a)Basic Intent

In this case, we wish to create a dream-stave that will induce astral travel while we sleep.

b)Design

Because I prefer the encirclement by the Thurisaz variant (as expressed in the Figures A and B of Diagram 10), we will use it as our template for creating a custom Draumstafur.

It is then a fairly simple matter for us to select the appropriate rune or runes to aid in inducing the desired state (with their total numerical value in mind). In this case, we will choose Ehwaz (for faring forth), Thurisaz (for applied power) and Fehu (chosen because it is the "sending rune" and for its added numerical value). The runes will be drawn in rigid and rounded variant-forms and included in our final design (please see my Diagram 11 for this example). Including the Thurisaz encirclement, this Draumstafur will total 54, which is divisible by 9 and 6 (both numbers of great power and force).

Diagram 11: Construction of a "Dream-stave"

Step A

ᚦ =

Step B

ᛗ = + and ᚦ = φ

and ᚠ = ‡
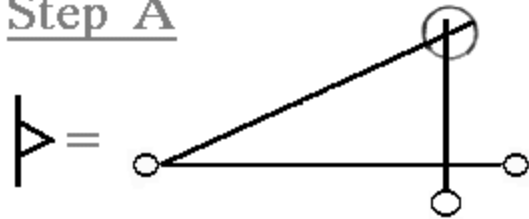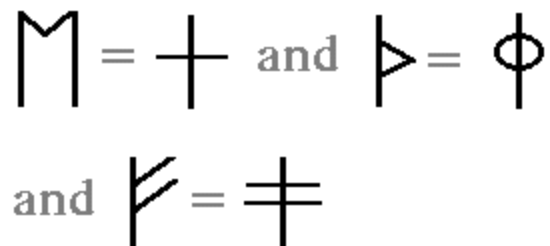
Step C
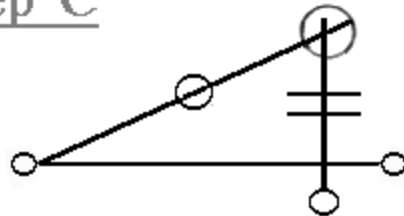
c)'Carving'

Using the long method, we would schedule our 'carving' operation to begin at 3:00 PM for Thurisaz and the encirclement and continue my work at 7:00 AM the following day for Ehwaz. The final rune, Fehu, would be drawn and charged at 1:00 PM. (for another schedule, please compare this with the alternate 'short method' suggested in the creation of the Terror-stave). In addition to properly

timing our work, we would also make sure to invoke the 'sator-arepo' formula and our patron deities at each stage of the magical operation. 'Carving', 'reddening' and 'singing' would of course, be performed in the normal manner.

d)Application

Our completed Draumstafur would drawn either on parchment, or etched into wood (or another permanent medium). This stave would be placed where we slept so that it could do its' work.

PART 2: SUPER-BINDS AND THEIR CONSTRUCTION

The Super-Bind

In Part 1 of "Understanding the Galdrabók", we explored the basic concepts of Sigil-Magic, as they relate to the Galdrabók. We also examined several examples of the Terror-Stave(Óttastafur), the Dream-Stave(Draumstafur) and walked through the steps for constructing original designs.

In Part 2, we will examine another type of design, the "Super-Bind". "Super-bind" is a term that I coined to describe bind-runes which employ more than 3 or 9 runes in their composition. A "Super-bind", such as those found in "THE GALDRABÓK" is a detailed runic 'statement' which

express the magical intent of its' designer in detail.

An excellent example of a "Super-bind" may be found on page 84 of "THE GALDRABÓK" and my Diagram 1. This design is listed as a 'galdratöluskip', or a 'ship of magical numbers', which in this case is intended to sink a ship.

Two of the most obvious rune forms employed in the 'ship' are a variant of Sowilo and the rune Gifu (Fig.1). The remainder of the runes that are used in this spell have been 'bound' together into complex binds on Gifu's arms. Many of these runes are ensigilled as well.

Diagram 1: 'Galdatöluskip'

Fig.1   Fig.2

ᚼ = ᛋᚷ   ᚼ = ᚾᚦᛋ

Fig.3   Fig.4

= ᛚᚠᚦᚷᚠ   = ᚠᛏᚷᛋ

Fig.5   Fig.6

= ᛋᚠᛗᛋ   = ᚠᚾᛚᛗᛦ
ᛉᛋᚲ

Fig.7

= ᚴᚦᚷᛏᛚ
ᚺᚠᚠᚢᚲ
ᚠᛦ
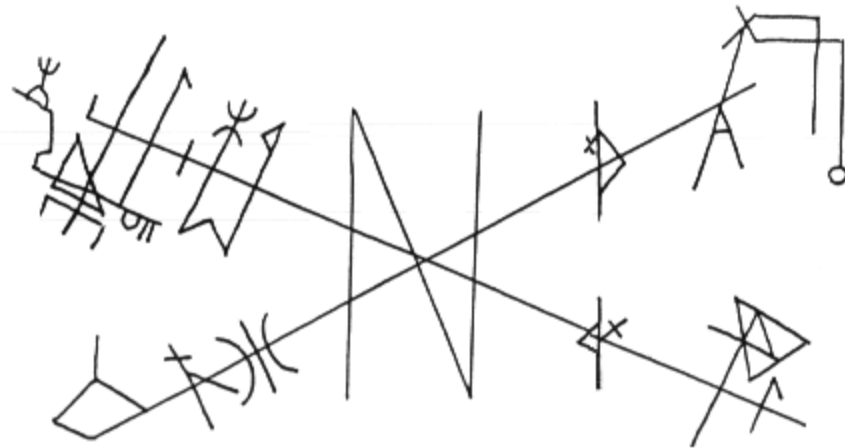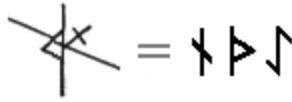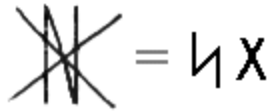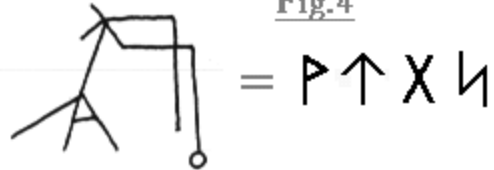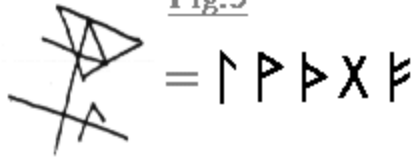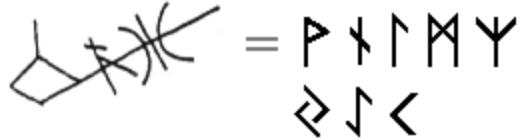
To cite a few examples: On the right side of the

'galdratöluskip', closest to the center of the central bind,

we have two examples of a simple bind that employs Nauthiz,

Thurisaz, Gifu and possibly Eihwaz (Fig.2). The lowest of

these two binds seems to have been reversed. It is possible

that this was done as a form of 'mirroring' the first bind.

It may also have been done in order to invoke a positive

manifestation of the runic energies, then a negative one as

part of a cycle of events affecting the ship in question.

A more complex bind is married with Gifu's

lowermost right-hand arm (Fig.3). It combines Laguz, Wunjo,

a variant of Thurisaz, Gifu and a variant of Fehu. Another

Laguz, rendered in its standard form neighbors this, and may

shed light on this large bind-form. I believe that Laguz is

so positioned as to link this particular bind-form with the

concept of water as it relates to the ship. The other runes

in our nearby bind act as agents for guaranteeing that the

water the ship will travel over will be storm-tossed.

Another bind resides on Gifu's upper left-hand arm.

This is a simple combination of a variant of Sowilo, Wunjo

reversed, and what appears to be a rounded-variant of

Mannaz (Fig.5).

These examples are a small, but enlightening part of

the entire 'galdratöluskip' "Super-bind" and serve to

illustrate for us the use of multiple binds in varying

numbers in a large and well-stated runic spell. For a more

in-depth analysis of this "Super-bind", please refer to my Diagram 1, Figures 1-7.

The author of this 'galdratöluskip' clearly intended to leave nothing to chance. He or she made sure that all contingencies were covered by the appropriate runes in a harmonious combination and that they added together into the proper numerical sum. If I have identified the runes correctly, the grand total of our 'ship of magical numbers' is 427, which is divisible by 7. According to Edred Thorsson, "7" is the 'death number' of northern numerology. Another number could not be better matched with the purpose of this "Super-bind".

The 'galdratöluskip' design, while enormous when compared to conventional bind-runes, serves to direct the runic energies invoked by it with an unparalleled precision.

A second example of the "Super-bind" can be seen on page 89 of "THE GALDRABÓK" and my Diagram 2. This is a 'Dreprún', or 'killing rune'. Like the 'galdratöluskip' this design also shows us the use of multiple bind-forms in a single design, but also employs the 'pictographic' method mentioned in Part 1 of this series.

Diagram 2: 'Dreprún'

= ᚼᚾᚷᛆᛋᚼᛏᚠᚲᚱ
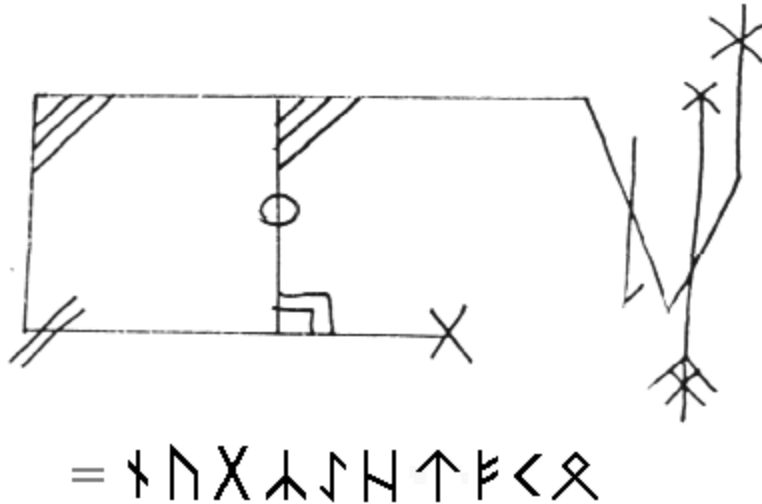
Here, we see a human figure that has been rendered in
the simplest symbolic terms, surrounded by runic forms. Some
of the binds in this "Super-bind" are quite obvious, such as
the combination of a reversed Algiz and Hagalaz in the lower
right-hand corner while others are less so. For example, we
can detect two Uruz runes that have been used to make up the
legs of the human figure and what appears to be a
combination of Fehu and Kenaz crowning his or her head.

On a side note, the ends of the lines encircling the
human figure terminate in an interesting fashion. Gifu is
employed at all ends, possibly with the intent to bind the
energy of the spell firmly to the victim and their personal
possessions (a concept that may also be expressed by the
Othala-like character created by the bind in the lowermost
right-hand corner. The numerical value of this "Super-bind"

appears to be 147, which is divisible by 7. Once more we encounter the 'death number'. For a further breakdown of this 'Dreprún', please refer to my Diagram 2.

In terms of a modern-day application, we can use these examples and ones like then to create our own "Super-binds".

Construction:

a)Basic Intent

Although many of the designs in "THE GALDRABÓK" have been created to either to bring misfortune upon an enemy, or to discover thieves, the reader must realize that the technology behind their creation can also be utilized for positive magical purposes. Our construction project will focus on just such a purpose: to aid in the healing of a critically-ill individual.

For the purposes of this exercise, our subjects' name is Bill. Bill is suffering from heart problems caused by arteriosclerosis and congenital defects.

Under normal circumstances, we would simply use the runes Othala and Uruz in combination (see "RUNENMAGIE", by Spiesberger) and call upon Freyja in her Gullveig (or healing) aspect. Generally, these runic and divine elements would be enough. But we will assume that Bill is seriously ill and that we need to magically intervene in a more

decisive manner. Although the creation of a "Super-bind" for this situation will take us considerably more time than a smaller, more conventional bind-form and require more of our thought and energies, we will realize a substantially greater result. One of the oldest rules of ceremonial magic is that any spell which is undertaken over a substantial period of time and with the full concentration and will of the magician, has a much greater chance of success than shorter spells with less work behind them. Hence the need for a "Super-bind" talisman; our patient is seriously ill and requires 'serious' assistance.

One more note must be added before we can begin discussion of our "Super-bind" project: this 'healing' "Super-bind" is not intended as a substitute for proper medical treatment. Our hypothetical patient would (and should) be advised to seek the care of a licensed physician. Our "Super-bind" will be offered only as a supportive influence and not as a cure for 'Bills' condition.

b)Design

To create our "Super-bind", we will add additional runes which are complimentary to Uruz and Othala and that will give us the appropriate numerical total. My source for these additional runes comes from the experience of our

groups' healer, Ms. Heidi Schultz and the material presented in Spiesberger's "RUNENMAGIE".

According to Herr Spiesberger and Frau Schultz, we will use the following: Thurisaz(to strengthen Bill's Aura), Ansuz(to increase his overall health), Nauthiz(to cause him to reach a more relaxed state, and thus aid in the healing process), Jera (to increase the body's vitality), Sowilo(for healing and strength), Tyr(to aid him in overcoming the illness and to combat arteriosclerosis), Laguz(again to strengthen the life force), Ehwaz(to banish depression) and lastly, Gifu(to transmute Bill's sexual energy into pure spirit). These runes, plus Othala and Uruz, the runes which comprise our patients name and Gullveigs', will give us a total of 23 runes. The numeric value of the runes used in our "Super-bind" will add up to 296(which is divisible by 3, the "holy number" of movement, action and progress, multiplied 888 times).

Having chosen our runes, we will compose our design. The first runes we will use will be rigid-variants of Othala and Uruz(see Diagram 3, Step 1). Next, we will add Gifu to our main bind-form(also Diagram, Step 2). The purpose for this addition is to use Gifu as a binding force to all of other the runes in the spell.

Diagram 3

Step 1

Step 2
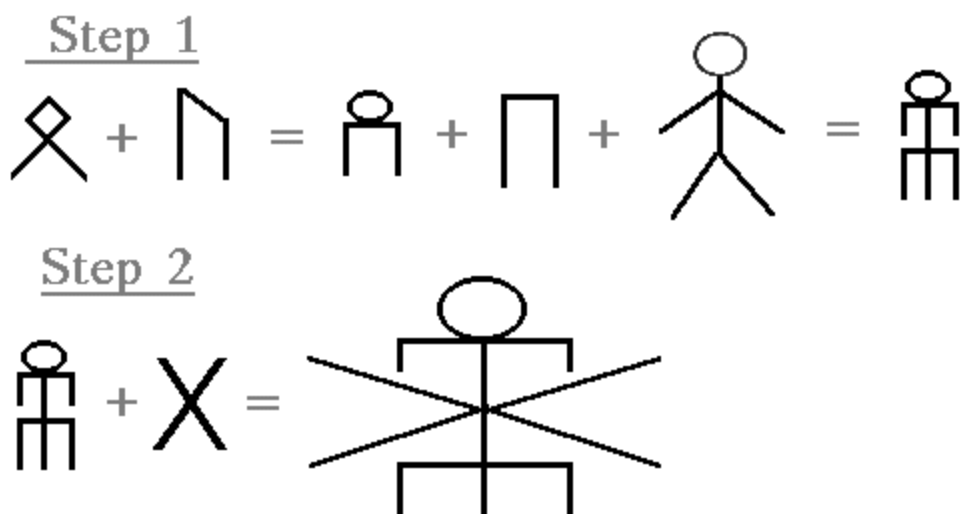
Next, we will create bind forms which comprise rigid

forms of Jera, Sowilo and Tyr (Diagram 4, Bind 1), and

another bind using Thurisaz, Ansuz, and Laguz (Diagram 4,

Bind 2).

Diagram 4

Bind 1

Bind 2
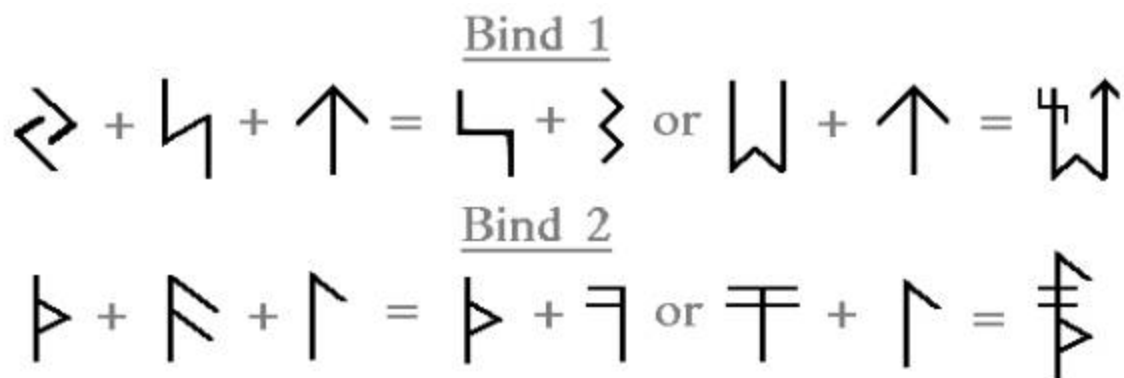
With these secondary binds having been created, we will

then add them to our main bind form (Diagram 5). We are

still left with Ehwaz and Nauthiz. Nauthiz can find its'

home next to our Thurisaz-Ansuz-Laguz bind on Gifu's

arms (Diagram 6) and Ehwaz in its' rigid-variant form can be

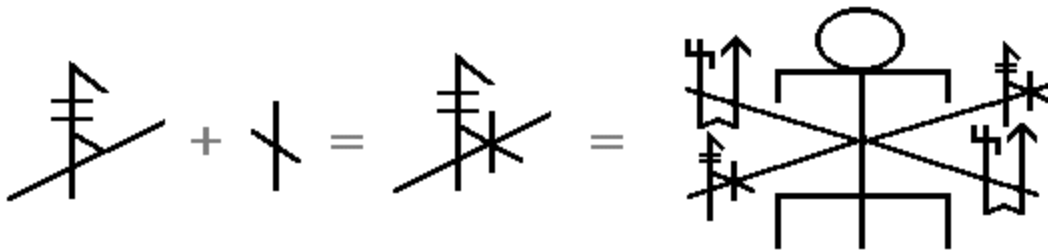added to our main bind-form (Diagram 7).
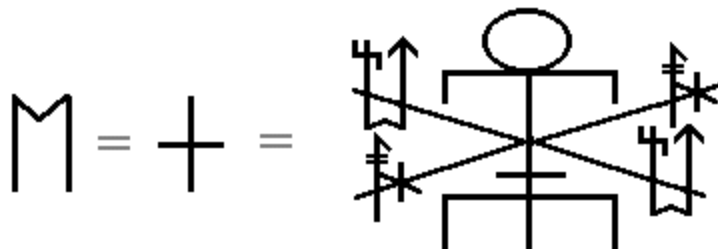
Diagram 5
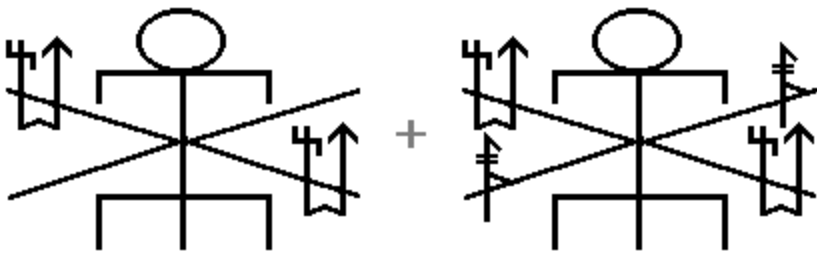
Diagram 6

Diagram 7

All that is left for us to do now is to 'personalize' the bind and add in Gullveig's name. To do this, we will create a bind of the runes spelling out the name "Bill" and add this to our design (Diagram 8). Gullveig's name can be integrated with our Thurisaz-Ansuz-Laguz bind-form, simply by adding in Gifu, Uruz, Ehwaz(as the other runes which comprise her name are already present). Please see Diagram 9 for these additions.
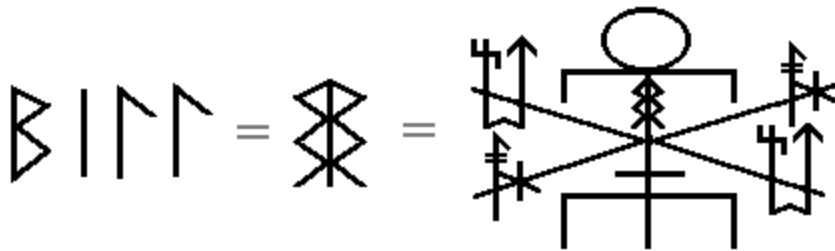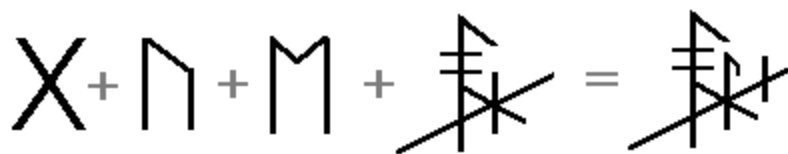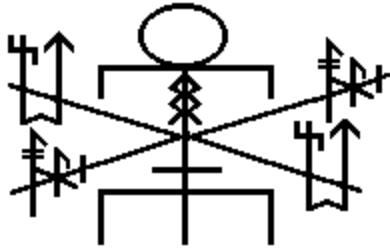
Diagram 8

Diagram 9

The final result can be seen in Diagram 10. We now have a "Super-Bind" in the tradition of "THE GALDRABÓK".

Diagram 10

c)'Carving'

In the 'carving' phase, we will follow the basic

guidelines we established in the creation of our Terror- and

Dream-staves. The timing of our operation could involve the

'carving' of our runes at each of their 'runic-hours'. This

is of course, the 'long-method'(for a detailed explanation

of this, please refer to Part 3: the Ægishjálmur). But

because of the sheer size of this "Super-bind" and the

serious condition of our subject, our timing will be based

on a shorter method. It will coincide with the hours of our

two central runes, Othala and Uruz. We would begin work at

11:00 am(Othala) and end at 2 PM(Uruz). For another 'short

method', please refer to Part 3: the Ægishjálmur.

Regardless of which schedule we chose, our work would

begin and end with the 'sator-arepo' incantation, prayers to

Gullveig and any other patron deity we felt would be

helpful.

The physical 'carving', 'reddening' and 'singing'

would, like our Terror- and Dream-staves be undertaken in the

conventional manner.

d)Application

The completed "Super-bind" will serve our patient as a powerful healing talisman. In all likelihood, the bind be placed in or near his sick-bed.

PART 3: THE ÆGISHJÁLMUR

The Ægishjálmur, or "Helm of Awe"

In Part 2, we explored examples of the "Super-Bind". In this section, we will explore at the last of "THE GALDRABÓK's major design families, the Ægishjálmur.

The Ægishjálmur, or Helm of Awe is perhaps the most elegant expression of runic sigil-magic. Here, rigid and rounded variant forms are often combined with other design structures to create sigils of unparalleled power and artistic beauty. It is through an understanding of rigid and rounded rune-forms and a grasp of the general structures employed in all Ægishjálmur that we can begin to grasp the original intent of the Helms presented in "THE GALDRABÓK", and undertake creation of our own Ægishjálmur.

The origins of Ægishjálmur are the subject of some controversy. Some scholars, such as Edred Thorsson, believe that the Helm of Awe or 'Ægishjálmur' was originally part of

the treasure-hoard of the Nibelungen. The 'eight-star' upon

which its designs are generally based is generally defined

as being none other than the runic symbol of the "world-

star", invoking the power of the nine worlds into the final

spell(although some versions utilize the Hagal-snowflake

instead).

However, Sven Ulfsson has advanced another theory about

the origins of the Helm which deserves mention. Ulfsson

believes that the Ægishjálmur originally derived its name

from the Sea-God, Ægir. Ulfsson bases his idea on entries

found in the "ICELANDIC-ENGLISH DICTIONARY", by G.T.Zoëga

(Sigdur Kristjánsson, Reykjavik, Iceland, 1922). The term

'Ægiris' is listed as a masculine noun meaning 'sea', or

'ocean'. 'Ægishjálmur' translates to 'over-awing helmet' and

the term 'Ægja' means to frighten or threaten. Ulfsson

believes that 'Ægishjálmur' literally means the 'Helm of

Ægir', and expresses the terrible power the sea is capable

of. While he does not disagree with the idea of the eight-

star and the world-star being synonymous with one another,

he does point out the similarity between the eight-spoked

design and the compass points used by ancient Norse mariners

to navigate. The close tie between these two symbols

presents a strong argument for the idea that the 'world-

star' as we know it today may have its roots in the maritime activities of our ancestors.

Personally, I support Ulfsson's theories, but I leave it to the reader to determine for themselves which theory they feel best explains the Ægishjálmur's origins.

In any case, regardless of which source the Ægishjálmur sprang from, scholars have universally agreed on the power of this mystic design. The Helm of Awe is frequently quoted by all sources as being able to grant its' wearer the ability to strike fear into an enemy and grant great magical powers.

There are two good examples of Ægishjálmur that can be found on pages 87 and 89 of "THE GALDRABÓK" (also see my Diagram 1); the 'Solomon's Innsigli' and the 'Vegvisir'. The former is described as a sigil carried for protection, and the latter is used to prevent its' wearer from becoming lost on a journey (which certainly supports Ulfssons' theory about the linkage between the eight-star and the compass).

Diagram 1: The 'Solomon's Innsigli' and the 'Vegvisr'
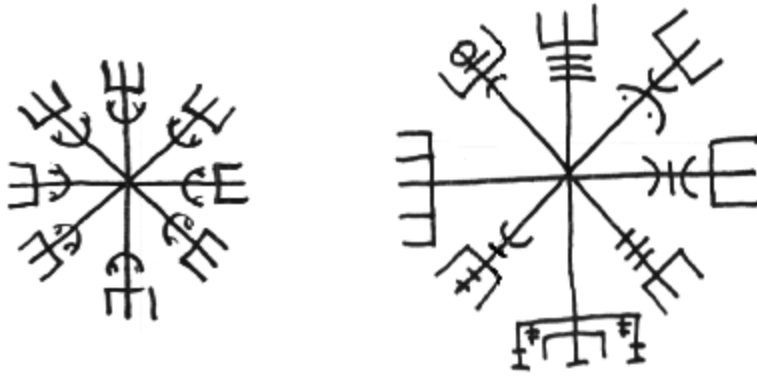
The 'Solomon's Innsigli' represents one of the most

basic forms of a Helm. It appears to employ only essential

construction elements, without the addition of runic-

variants. The 'Vegvisir' on the other hand, is more complex

and clearly utilizes runic variants in addition to standard

construction elements.

Basic Construction Elements of the Ægishjálmur: Zones and

Specific Symbols

1. Zones

In "NORTHERN MAGIC", Edred Thorsson explains that

Ægishjálmur, (like later "Hex-Signs") are composed according

to three zones, radiating from the center of the eight-star

moving outwards (see my Diagram 2, Figure A). The first zone

at the center expresses the inner-being. The second zone

comprises the subjective universe and the third outermost

zone, the objective universe. Based upon the overall intent

of the spell, runic variant symbols are placed according to

the zone they are intended to affect and the eight-star is modified accordingly.

For example, if the sigil is designed to affect both the wearer and the outside world, those symbols which would affect the inner-self are placed in the second zone on shortened spokes and those which would affect the objective universe are placed on the spokes furthest from the center(the third zone). If on the other hand, the spell is intended solely to affect the outer world, then the runic symbols will be placed evenly on all eight spokes in the third zone (please see Diagram 1 and Diagram 2, Figure B).

In addition to these zones, the Ægishjálmur employ specific symbols in order to 'route' the magical forces they invoke into the proper directions. In "NORTHERN MAGIC", we are given an insight into these symbols.

2. Terminal Forks

The first symbols that we will address are what I call 'terminal-forks'. These are found at the ends of the spokes of the eight-star, facing outwards. The rigid terminal-fork(see Figure C), acts to both radiate magical energy outwards and prevent a return flow. The rounded terminal-fork (frequently seen with smaller cup-like endings) acts in a more profound manner to prevent a back-flow(see Figure D).

The last kind of terminal fork worth mentioning is an open ended Algiz-like design (Figure E), which Thorsson tells us, acts as an 'activator', radiating the power of the Helm outwards into space.

3. Other Construction Elements

The next group of symbols are either complimentary to the terminal-forks or are found elsewhere in a typical Helm. The first of these symbols is the circular terminator (which we have encountered previously in the section dealing with the design of a Terror-stave. See Figure F of this Diagram and Part 1, Diagram 5, the 'Terror-Stave'). This symbol acts to re-circulate some of the magical energy of the Helm back to itself (in effect re-charging it automatically).

Another symbol is a group of horizontal lines crossing a spoke(see Figure G). These lines act to accelerate or amplify the magical energy invoked by the sigil as a whole. When a straight horizontal line crowns a terminating fork at the ends of a spoke, it also acts to prevent diffusion of magical energy(see Figure H).

Small curving lines crossing a spoke or a terminal fork (see Figure I) are also frequently encountered. These act very much like a cup would, catching any returning energy and preventing it from reaching the wearer. They can be

found at the ends of a terminal fork(as in Figure D), or by themselves(generally placed in the second zone).

Now, as if all of this isn't enough, a typical Helm of Awe also employs rounded and rigid rune-forms in combination with each other and the construction elements mentioned above. Often, variant rune forms and Ægishjálmur design elements are identical to one another and in the final designs are combined together to serve dual purposes. For this reason it is often impossible to separate the original runes of the specific spell from the basic Helm and we are left with only the description their designers give to us to go on. Nevertheless, we are not prevented by this from the creation of original designs. If the basic guidelines of the Ægishjálmur construction elements are kept in mind and we use the proper runic variant-forms we will arrive at the same results as the Icelandic and Germanic sorcerers of old.
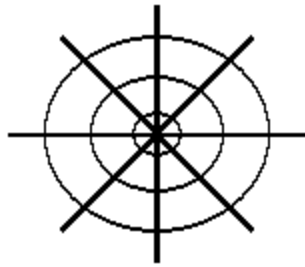
Diagram 2: Design Elements of the Ægishjálmur

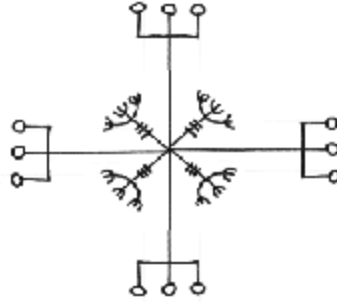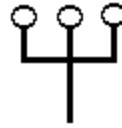Fig.A   Fig.B

Fig.C   Fig.D   Fig.E   Fig.F   Fig.G

Fig.H   Fig.I

Construction:

a)Basic Intent

For our design example, we will create a Helm that is intended for general magical power, moving forcefully along its spokes and outwards into the objective universe.

b)Design

Our Helm will employ the basic Ægishjálmur construction elements and the old Norse runic-number spell "luwatuwa"(see "FUTHARK", page 103), or "Laguz, Uruz, Wunjo, Ansuz, Tyr, Uruz, Wunjo and Ansuz". These add to a total of 8 runes

equaling 66, or 6 (the number of creation and destruction) times 11 (the classic "master-number" of conventional western numerology).

Our first step will be to draw an eight-star. Everything we use from here on out will be incorporated into this basic framework.

For simplicity's sake, our Helm will be designed to operate in the Objective Universe (zone 3). As a result, all of the spokes of the wheel will of even length (see my Diagram 3).

The first element we will add will be four terminating forks with horizontal lines capping their ends (see also Diagram 3). These forks are not only intended to radiate the power outwards, but to also ensure that it remains focused in that direction (which is why we are not simply employing the Algiz-like forks instead; our intention is to create a more lasting and directed spell).
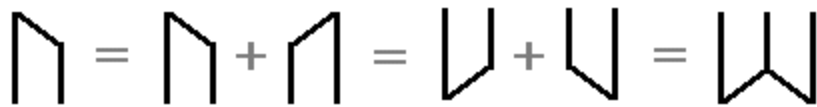
Diagram 3
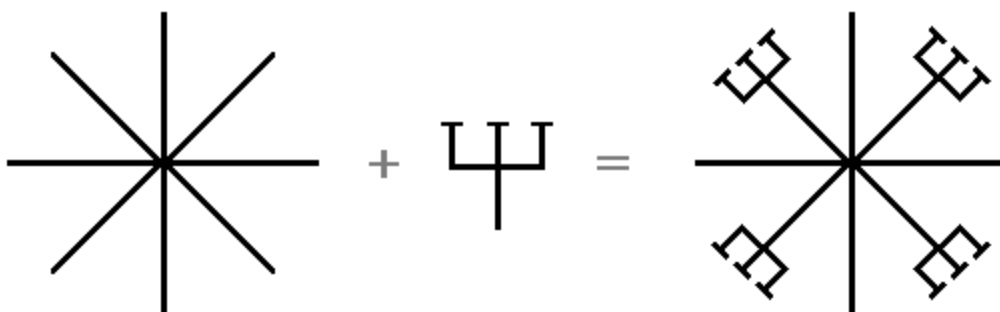
The next step will be to create an ensigilled bind of our power-word. The first rune, Laguz is rendered in its rigid-form (Diagram 4, Step 1). The second rune, Uruz is also drawn in this manner, reversed, mirrored, and bound with the Laguz-form (also see Diagram 4, Steps 2 and 3).
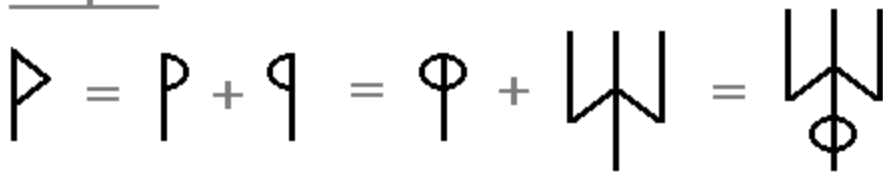
Diagram 4:

A word of explanation is deserved here: The 'reversal' of Uruz is undertaken in order that the final bind-form will face outwards into the external universe and send its energy in that direction, rather than send it straight back to the source of the spell. While it appears that this step might act to reverse the influences of the runes (by reversing their forms), the runes are in fact depicted in the normal

manner from the artificial perspective of the outside world,

and thus have not truly been 'reversed'. According to the

rules of Sigil-magic, they still retain the 'positive'

attributes of their 'non-mirrored' parent-forms. In

addition, by taking this step, Uruz has been repeated twice

and thus we are able to include both occurrences of this

rune in our original number-formula. Also, by combining the

'mirrored' Uruz and Laguz on a spoke, we have also created

Tyr in the process(see Diagram 4, Steps 1 and 3 for this).
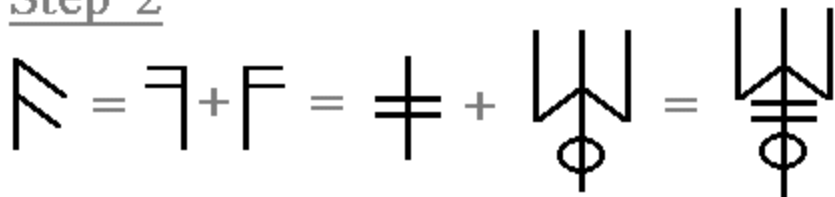
Only two more runes remain; Ansuz and Wunjo. Because

Ansuz and Wunjo also occur twice in the number-formula they

will be mirrored as well and placed below the Uruz-Laguz-Tyr

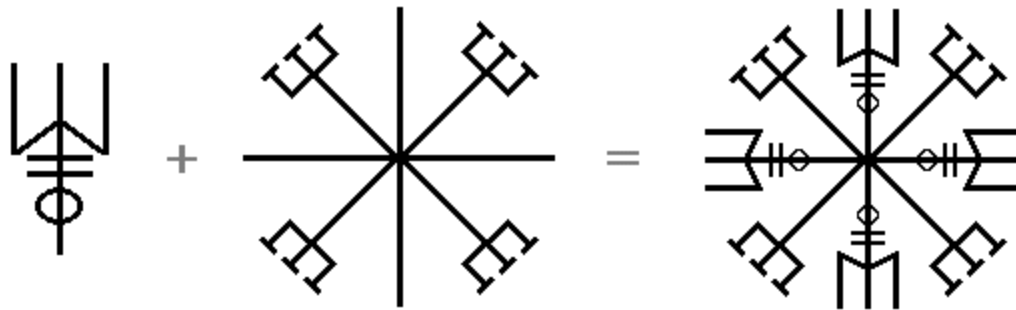bind form(see Diagram 5, Steps 1 and 2).

Diagram 5

The final design is applied to the remaining four

'open' spokes of our helm(see Diagram 6). But we are not

completely done yet.

Diagram 6

Our next step will be to add additional 'cup' forms to
the ends of the fork created by our bind(see Diagram 7), in
order to hold back any negative energies that might attempt
to return to the Helm. We will also add a trio of horizontal
elements to our other four spokes to act as accelerators and
to also represent rigid variants of Tyr, invoking victory
and success(see Diagram 7).

Diagram 7
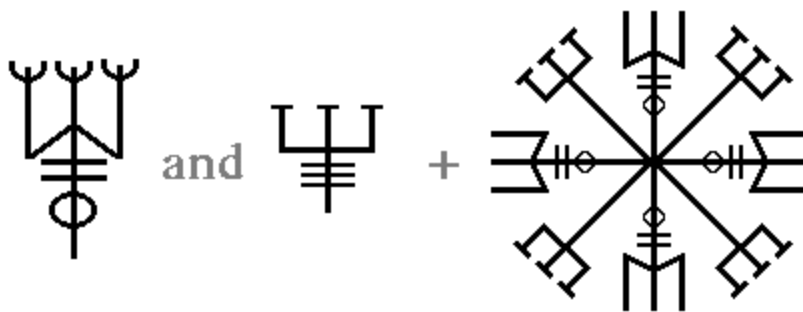
The final result can be seen in its' entirety in
Diagram 8. As a side note, a happy accident occurred when we
created the Uruz-Laguz-Tyr bind form; a fourth runic-form

was also fashioned. This is a rigid-variant of Sowilo(which we can invoke, or not invoke as we see fit). The total numerical value of our design is 264(the sum of all four repetitions of our bind formula) and 68(our 4 Tyr variants), or 332(which is in turn divisible by 2(664 times), the number of cooperation between two forces. In this case those forces would be the magician and the magic he or she will invoke with the aid of this Helm. If Sowilo is included in the charging of this Helm, the total value will be 396. This is divisible by 3 and 9(an even more powerful pair of magical number-values).

Diagram 8
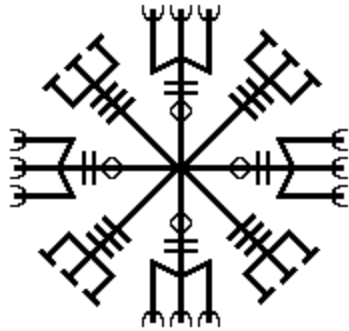
c)'Carving'

Our Helm will be drawn and charged in the same manner as any bind; each runic element will be 'carved', 'reddened' and 'sung'. The timing of our operation can be approached in two ways. The long method involves the 'carving'(i.e. 'carving', 'reddening' and 'singing) of the runes in our

basic bind of "luwatuwa" in conjunction with their runic-hours. This method, when applied to the "luwatuwa" formula will take us three days to complete.

We would begin at 9:00 am with Laguz, continuing at 2:00 PM with Uruz, then at 8:00 PM 'carve' Wunjo. The following day, we would start work again at 4:00 PM for Ansuz, and then 'carve' our next rune, Tyr at 5:00 AM. That afternoon, at 2:00 pm, we would 'carve' Uruz, then at 8:00 PM, Wunjo. On the third and last day we would 'carve' Ansuz at 3:00 PM and the remainder of our design.

One of the shorter methods we might employ as an alternative, utilizes the sum total of our runes, or 396 (with Sowilo added). This equals 9(when added together and rendered down to its lowest sum) and we would begin our work at the ninth hour, or 9:00 PM. Our sum is also divisible by 3 and if we chose, we could begin instead at the third hour of the day, 3:00 PM. Of the two times, I would choose a 9:00 PM starting time(because of the greater power this number has).

Both the long and short methods will work. The choice is up to the designer and just how thorough they want or need to be.

Holding to tradition, we would also use the 'sator-

arepo' incantation at the start and finish of our endeavor.

d)Application

Our Helm may be etched onto metal, wood, or parchment.

It may be carried as a talisman during magical operations,

or etched or drawn onto magical tools.

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Conclusion

This ends my series on understanding basic Galdrabók

designs and their construction. Although I feel that

research in this area has opened up certain doors, there are

still many design forms found within the Galdrabók's pages

that defy understanding. It is my hope that through

additional exploration, that their mysteries will be

deciphered and that the technology that they employ will

also become available to today's student of the northern

magical tradition.

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